

# **TITIRANGI BAPTIST CHURCH**

Statement of Faith, Constitution and Rules

adopted 2 Oct 2016

# STATEMENT OF FAITH

## 1. THE CHURCH AND OUR BELIEFS

1.1. The name of this church is Titirangi Baptist Church (TBC). Our church is a community who publicly unite around the following statement of faith and who are committed to TBC's vision, mission, aims and function.

1.2. We believe that:

1.2.1. The Bible is uniquely inspired by God and is therefore entirely authoritative and trustworthy in all Christian belief and practice.

1.2.2. There is only one, living, true and eternal God, the creator of all. He is holy, just and infinite in wisdom, love, and power; sovereign over all things. He reveals Himself as Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. God is at the same time One and Three: united in the one nature.

1.2.3. God created all people in His image but each person has rebelled against Him and we are therefore subject to God's just judgment of death. Jesus Christ died as a sacrifice in the place of sinners so that whoever believes in Him will not perish but receive eternal life. This gift of salvation is given by God's grace, received in faith, and is not because of any human merit or work.

1.2.4. Jesus Christ is the eternal sinless Son of God, through whom and for whom the universe was created. In fulfilment of the scriptures He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He is fully God and truly human. He was crucified and died for the forgiveness of sins. He rose bodily from the dead and ascended into heaven to be Lord of both the living and the dead.

1.2.5. The Holy Spirit convicts, converts and makes alive forever everyone who believes in Jesus; joining them to the body of Christ, The Church, and indwelling each one so as to guide, empower and equip all for godly living and service.

1.2.6. God has established His Church as the community of all those who are saved by faith in Jesus through grace alone. We are part of that global community, the Body of Christ, and united with it by faith in glorifying God, advancing his kingdom.

1.2.7. At the return of the Lord Jesus, God will draw history to a close and judge all people. Before God those who have received forgiveness for sins by faith in Jesus will be granted endless joy serving God in the new heavens and new earth; those who are not reconciled to God through Jesus Christ will face His just judgement.

1.3. Holding to our convictions, but not as core tenets of our statement of faith, our church practice is to hold the following:

1.3.1. That baptism is taught in Scripture for Christian believers in obedience to Christ's instruction, on or after conversion, and to be practiced by full-immersion in water.

1.3.2. That the Lord's Supper, known as communion, forms a regular part of our meeting for worship.

## **CONSTITUTION AND RULES**

### **2. AIM, MISSION AND FUNCTION**

2.1. We are a New Zealand church who exists:

2.1.1. To further the Kingdom of God within our own congregation, within our local community, and also around the world.

2.1.2. To bring glory to God by gathering regularly to share life, learn, worship and encourage one another.

2.1.3. To serve those in our local community by meeting practical needs, bringing understanding and peace, seeking justice for those on the margins and offering spiritual healing through the Christian gospel.

2.2. Our vision is expressed as "Called in Christ: to community, to the world, to God's glory".

### **3. STRUCTURE**

3.1. The church is an autonomous body governed through its members and affiliated with the Baptist Union of New Zealand.

3.2. The leadership of the church consists of those elected to eldership and pastoral roles. Together they are responsible to the members of TBC (the membership) for the oversight and direction of this church.

3.3. The church may set up a Charitable Trust or Trusts to provide resources which will enable the Church through the Trust to minister to its local community by seeking to meet the social, emotional, physical, spiritual and educational needs of the

people of its local community. The church shall elect Trustees when required under the relevant Trust Deed(s). Nominations and voting shall be in accordance with the election of elders in clause 5 of this Constitution.

#### **4. MEMBERSHIP**

4.1. All who believe in the Lord Jesus for salvation are members of His Church, the body of Christ. We affirm the biblical priority of belonging to a local congregation for service, worship, teaching, discipleship, growth in understanding, and in fulfilling the mission of Christ.

4.2. A membership roll (the roll) shall be kept and reviewed annually.

##### Becoming a Member of TBC

4.3. Individuals may apply to become members of TBC by making their desire known in writing to an elder or pastor.

4.4. Membership is open to anyone who has been baptised by immersion as a believer in the Lord Jesus and who is in agreement with TBC's statement of faith.

4.4.1. A believer who desires to be baptised by immersion, but is prevented by physical disability or other special reasons, may be baptised in a manner appropriate to their circumstances and therefore become eligible for membership.

4.4.2. The elders will consider application for membership from believers out of other Christian traditions on a case-by-case basis.

4.5. Those who are already members of another Baptist church may have their membership status transferred to TBC after an application has been made to the elders/pastors.

4.6. Those accepted to membership will be added to the roll and received into membership at a regular church worship service.

##### Ending Membership

4.7. A member may choose to resign their membership by giving written notice to an elder or pastor.

4.8. If a member has not attended a worship service for 12 months or more, the elders may remove them from the roll after having made reasonable attempts to make contact.

4.9. Members may be removed from membership by unanimous agreement of the elders, after due consideration in line with Matthew 18:15-17 for: serious moral misconduct; deliberate departure from the statement of faith; intentional undermining of the mission, vision and aims of the church.

## 5. ELDERS

### The Purpose of Elders at TBC

- 5.1. Elders are appointed by the gathered membership to take spiritual oversight of the church for a period of service.
- 5.2. Elders will meet regularly to consider matters affecting the governance of TBC: the long term standing and spiritual welfare of our church; taking care of the strategic and spiritual growth of TBC. They will continue in regular attendance at elders meetings and worship services, and faithfully discharge their duties.
- 5.3. They are the officers of the church Charitable Trust with regard to the requirements of New Zealand law and adhere to the obligations of the position.

### The Role of Elders

- 5.4. The biblical position of elder is clearly set out in the New Testament as a role of servant leadership in God's Church. Those who lead us will be men and women who fulfil the following requirements:
  - 5.4.1. Faith: any person aspiring to the position of elder at TBC should be in full agreement with our statement of faith and able to defend it accordingly.
  - 5.4.2. Character: elders must be established members of TBC, who have proven themselves in leadership and who are well respected inside the church and out. They are to be spiritually mature, of good character, and above reproach.

### Responsibilities

- 5.5. The elders, along with the senior pastor(s) are delegated the responsibility for leading TBC in our long term vision. They guard our beliefs, promote our values and ensure our faithfulness to the Lord Jesus and His mission.
- 5.6. After a consultation process with the members of TBC the elders may employ ministry and ancillary staff for specialised functions.
- 5.7. Elders together bear the ultimate responsibility for the support and care of TBC's employees and pastors.
- 5.8. Elders also act to ensure sound financial and legal governance of TBC, keeping the internal structures of management in line with the constitution of the church. As such they are accountable to the gathered membership of TBC and the laws of New Zealand.

### Appointment and Term

- 5.9. There will normally be 6-8 elders serving in addition to the pastor(s) at any one time. There must be more elected elders than pastors in any given eldership team. The numbers of elders may be reviewed by the elders from time to time.

- 5.10. The senior pastor is an elder for the full term of their call to TBC. Other pastors called to serve TBC may be invited to join the eldership at the agreement of the elders for all or part of their term of call.
- 5.11. The elders will invite nominations for new elders as necessary. The elders will present the most suitable candidates to the membership for appointment.
- 5.12. Those nominated will be appointed to eldership by secret ballot, upon receiving not less than 75% approval of the members gathered to elect them, up to the number of elders required. See 8.4.
- 5.13. Elders will be appointed for a term of 2 years. Elders may be re-elected for a maximum of 3 consecutive terms (a total of 6 years continuous service). Elders will not be eligible to stand again for at least one year. No more than two elders will normally stand down in any one appointment round.
- 5.14. By unanimous agreement, the elders may co-opt individual members of TBC into the eldership for a period of no more than one year for a specific purpose of spiritual or strategic development. No more than 2 elders may be co-opted at any one time. After the maximum period of 12 months the co-opted individual(s) must step down from eldership or be presented to the congregation for appointment as an elder. The initial period of co-option counts as part of the maximum 6 year period of eldership service.
- 5.15. An elder may be required, by the unanimous agreement of the other elders, to step down from eldership if the elder is no longer able to meet the eldership conditions of character, faith and/or responsibility.

#### Elders Meetings

- 5.16. The pastor(s) and elders will normally meet at least once a month for prayer, discussion, discernment and the fulfilment of their responsibilities as elders.
- 5.17. The pastor(s) and elders will ensure that all proper records of church meetings, finances and correspondence are kept in good order. The elders will prepare and present an annual report and audit annual accounts to the membership at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

## **6. PASTORS**

- 6.1. The role of pastor is a significant area of service and leadership in the life of a congregation. In recognising the call of God on an individual's life, the congregation of TBC make financial and practical provision to enable those gifted and duly called to fulfil the duties of their God given ministry, in Word and good works for the building up of God's people to maturity and the extension of God's Kingdom.
- 6.2. Senior Pastor(s) are entrusted with spiritual oversight of the church in co-operation with the elected elders. The primary responsibilities of the senior

pastor(s) are to oversee the ministry and service of TBC. The senior pastor(s) must be in wholehearted agreement of our statement of faith.

- 6.3. Unless agreed in writing to the contrary, the relationship between the church and those with a Terms Of Call to serve as pastor at TBC, will not be an employment relationship, but a relationship of spiritual service, and is not intended to create a legal relationship.

#### Calling a Pastor to Serve at TBC

- 6.4. When a vacancy occurs for a senior pastor, a search committee will be appointed by the elders. After due process and investigation the committee shall bring one nomination to the church at a meeting called for that purpose. See 8.4
- 6.5. The nominee for senior pastor shall be called to serve TBC if no less than 80% of members present affirm the appointment by secret ballot.
- 6.6. Other pastors may be appointed on a Terms of Call to serve TBC by the elders, after due process, and a congregational approval by no less than 75% of the members present at a meeting called for that purpose. See 8.4

#### Ending the Call to the Role of Pastor

- 6.7. The church or the pastor shall give 3 months' notice of a decision to end the call to the role of pastor unless an alternative notice period is negotiated between the parties.
- 6.8. Any resolution to end the call to the role of pastor requires a vote of at least 50% of votes cast by secret ballot at a properly constituted special members' meeting called for that purpose. See 8.5-8.8.
- 6.9. While it is acknowledged that the senior pastor is not an employee, the church membership shall ensure that the pastor is treated with fairness and dignity upon the conclusion of the pastorate. Any dispute or difference arising out of the conclusion of the pastorate must be referred to an independent party for resolution by way of mediation or such alternative dispute resolution process that is agreed as being appropriate. In the event it is not possible to reach agreement as to the identity of the independent party, a senior staff member of the Baptist Union shall appoint such an independent person.

## **7. MINISTRY LEADERS**

- 7.1. We are committed to every person in our congregation finding their place in serving God's Kingdom and their role in TBC. The pastor(s) and elders will encourage individuals to serve in and lead ministry teams in line with their spiritual gifts and character.
- 7.2. Ministry team leaders are appointed by, and are responsible to, the pastoral staff and will work under their direction, with their support and in line with TBC's beliefs, aims, values, practices and within an agreed budget.

## 8. CHURCH MEETINGS

8.1. The purpose of any members meeting is to seek, discover and confirm the mind of God on matters about the life and work of TBC and our mission.

### Annual General Meeting

8.2. The church financial year will end on 31st December and an AGM will be held within 4 months. An elder will chair the AGM.

8.3. The AGM should include:

8.3.1. Consideration of the annual report.

8.3.2. Receipt of the audited accounts for the preceding year.

8.3.3. Presentation of the budget for the current financial year (which would normally have been approved by a members meeting before the beginning of the current financial year).

### Members Meeting

8.4. The following are matters that must be decided by a members meeting:

8.4.1. any changes to the statement of faith, constitution and rules of TBC. **This meeting requires 28 days' notice to the members. See 11.**

8.4.2. the appointment of a pastor or an elder. **This meeting requires 21 days' notice to the members.**

8.4.3. the approval of the annual budget. **This meeting requires 14 days' notice to the members.**

8.4.4. any capital or unbudgeted expenditure (including land or property) above 3% of the agreed **operating expenditure** budget, (see 8.3.3). This meeting requires 14 days' notice to the members.

8.4.5. any changes to the statement of faith, constitution and rules.

### Special Meetings

8.5. **In addition to** the matters outlined in 8.4, special meetings may be called by the elders. Alternatively the elders, on receipt of a request signed by at least 20% of the membership, shall call a special meeting of the membership within 21 days of the request being received.

8.6. Two weeks' notice of the special meeting must be given to the membership.

### Voting

8.7. Both church members and committed attendees are able to attend church meetings and shall have an equal voice in the discussions, but only members may



vote. The chairperson shall have a deliberative vote and, in the case of a deadlock, a casting vote.

- 8.8. Voting, other than for pastors (see 6.5) and elders (see 5.12), shall be by a show of hands or voice. Members may request voting be cast by secret ballot through a show of hands of no less than 10% of members present at the meeting.
- 8.9. A proxy for voting purposes must be signed by the member and delivered in writing to the nominated representative of the elders.
- 8.10. A quorum of at least 25% of church membership is required to be present at any members meeting where decisions are made.

## **9. DECLARATION OF TRUST**

- 9.1. Any land or any property including church buildings and manses shall be vested in the Baptist Union as Trustee, which shall hold them for and on behalf of the church; and shall deal with the property by consent and direction of the church in accordance with the Trusts declared in the Sixth Schedule to the Baptist Union Incorporation Act 1923, together with the additional trust as follows:

“To ensure that the holding, preaching and teaching by persons in or associated with the congregation of Titirangi Baptist Church (or any other name which the said church may adopt) of the principles of Conditional Immortality more particularly set forth in articles 7-11 of the constitution of the Conditional Immortality Association Incorporated of Auckland<sup>1</sup>, be permitted and to ensure that sympathetic assistance is given to alleviate the concerns of any such persons who may feel that the right to hold, teach and preach Conditional Immortality in the Titirangi Baptist Church is being hindered or obstructed by persons in the Church who may be of a contrary understanding.”

## **10. NO PRIVATE PECUNIARY PROFIT FOR ANY INDIVIDUAL**

- 10.1. No decision of the church or its leadership shall be made which would allow a member or members to receive any private pecuniary profit provided that:

10.1.1. A member may receive reimbursement for all expenses properly incurred by that member in connection with the affairs of the church.

10.1.2. The church may pay reasonable and proper remuneration to any officer or employee of the church in return for services actually rendered to the church.

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<sup>1</sup> “7. We believe that human beings are by nature mortal. Genesis 2:7; 3:19; 1 Timothy 6:16; 2 Timothy 1:10; Romans 2:6-7.; 8. We believe that human beings in death are unconscious. Psalm 6:5; 115:17; Ecclesiastes 9:5,10. This is likened to “sleep”. Job 14:12; Psalm 13:3; Jeremiah 51:39; Daniel 12:2; John 11:11-14; 1 Corinthians 15:51.; 9. We believe that immortality is obtained only through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 15:21-23; 2 Timothy 4:7-8; 1 John 5:9-12.; 10. We believe that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked, to be followed by the Judgment. Acts 24:15; John 5:25,28,29; Revelation 20:12,13.; 11. We believe that evil and evil-doers shall be finally destroyed. Psalm 145:20; Matthew 10:28 Romans 6:21; Philippians 3:19; Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 3:8; Revelation 22:3.; 12. We believe in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Acts 1:11; John 14:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:16.” cited from [http://homepages.slingshot.co.nz/~durge/statement\\_of\\_faith/statement\\_of\\_faith.htm](http://homepages.slingshot.co.nz/~durge/statement_of_faith/statement_of_faith.htm), accessed August 8th 2016, 10:26am

10.1.3. Any member of the church may be paid for all usual professional business or trade charges for services rendered, time expended and all acts done by that member or by any firm or entity of which that member is a partner, employee or associate, in connection with the affairs of the church.

10.1.4. Any member may retain any remuneration properly payable to the member by any company or undertaking with which the member may be in any way concerned or involved for which that member has acted in any capacity whatever notwithstanding that member's connection with that company or undertaking is any way attributable to that member's connection with that church.

10.1.5. Nothing shall prevent the church from making payments to any individual (whether a member of the church or not) in fulfilling any of the purposes expressed in clause 2.

10.2. Members or leaders of the church, in determining all reimbursements, remuneration and charges payable in the terms of this clause, shall ensure that the restrictions imposed by the following clause are strictly observed.

10.3. Notwithstanding anything contained or implied in this Constitution and Rules, no member of the church or any person associated with that member shall participate in or materially influence any decision made by the church in respect to the payment to or on behalf of that member or associated person, of any income benefit or advantage whatsoever.

## **11. ALTERATION OF CONSTITUTION AND RULES**

11.1. Notice of proposed changes to the constitution shall be given by the elders to the congregation in 4 consecutive Sunday worship services prior to a members meeting called for that purpose.

11.2. TBC members shall receive written notice detailing proposed changes at least 28 days prior to a members meeting called for that purpose.

11.3. No alterations or additions shall be made to the statement of faith, constitution and rules unless adopted by a majority of at least 75% of the members present at a members meeting.

11.4. Unless the church agrees to forgo its charitable status and income tax exemption, no alteration shall be made to this constitution and rules that would in any way detract from the exclusively charitable nature of the church and in particular shall not alter the provisions of clause 12. See 8.4.1

## **12. WINDING UP PROVISIONS**

12.1. Subject to clauses 17, 18 and 19 of the Sixth Schedule to the Baptist Union Incorporation Act 1923, if the members resolve at a properly constituted meeting of the church adopted by a majority of at least two-thirds of the members present at such church meeting that the church should be wound up then the net proceeds

arising from such winding up shall be applied with the prior approval of the church members and the prior approval of the Baptist Union of New Zealand to such charitable purposes within New Zealand as the members may determine or, in default of such determination, as may be determined by a Judge of the High Court of New Zealand on application by the members, and such proceeds shall not be paid or distributed amongst the members of the church.